

Conservation Notes

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SPRING 2014

Most Unusual Annual Kids Squirrel Hunt

By Don Lackey, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician

On February 15, Scott Dooley, Scott's brother-in-law, Jeff Turbville and I headed to the woods of Copiah county for our annual squirrel hunt with the kids and grandkids. Anytime you can take a kid hunting is one of the greatest conservation learning experiences for them and the adults. The kids enjoyed another successful hunt, taking 16 squirrels that morning. The highlight of the hunt was Syble



The underside of the squirrel on the left is the common fox squirrel and the underside of the squirrel on the right is a mixture of black, grey and white color due to a crossing of a Black squirrel and a Fox squirrel.



Enjoying an unusual squirrel hunt were: (left to right) Syble Dooley, JoJo Turbville, PeeWee (four leg hunter), Clay Lackey, Pistol (another four leg hunter), Bailey Turbville and Stephen Dooley.

Dooley taking her first squirrel and an unusual squirrel at that. The squirrel that Syble killed had a very unusual color fur for a fox squirrel. The fur on the belly of the squirrel was black, grey and white instead of light red. The following Monday I contacted our area Wildlife Biologist and he confirmed that this squirrel was

the offspring of a Black squirrel and a Fox Squirrel which does not happen very often. I have hunted these woods for 40 plus years and have never seen a black squirrel in this area. As mentioned, anytime you're outside with your kids or grandkids it's time well spent...you might even learn something new.



Representing Hinds County SWCD at the 2014 MACD Banquet were: (left to right) Phillip Mikell, Reginald Spears, Cindy Ayers Elliott, Ruben Evans, Wyvette Robinson, David and Martha Barton, Murray and Wren Fulton and Amos and Jean Norman.



Earth Team Volunteers, District and NRCS Employees put on their "Cat in the Hat" hats and read to students at Bates and Lake Elementary Schools for "Read Across America 2014".



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This issue of "Conservation Notes" is in memory of long time Earth Team member Mrs. Faye Reed

Long time Earth Team member Mrs. Faye Reed transitioned from this life to her heavenly home on December 11th. Faye was an Earth Team Volunteer member for over 20 years. She was actively involved in the Ladies Tours, Membership Drive, Tree Day, Poster & Essay Reception and other Earth Team activities. She will long be remembered for her kind heart and sweet smile. During events that involved food Faye would bring sugar free desserts and other items for anyone that was a diabetic; she knew first hand what it meant to be a diabetic. She was born in Vicksburg and spent her adult years in Edwards after marrying Mr. Clifton Reed, Jr. Her husband, Clifton Reed Jr., join



Faye Reed, long time Earth Team member, will be missed by everyone.

the Earth Team shortly after Faye and is still an active member. Part of her dedicated Christian service was ministering through the Earth Team. Faye is missed not only by the Earth Team but also by the entire Hinds/Jackson Field Office.



Faye Reed, center, is pictured with Earth Team members in November 2013 at the Annual Fall Earth Team Luncheon.

Small Ruminant Workshops



4th Saturday of each month
Beginning February 22 -August 23, 2014

Registration: 7:00 am—8:00 am

Workshops: 8:00 am—4:00 pm

Continental breakfast & lunch included, with mileage reimbursement for all attendees.

ALL of the following sessions (1-7) are scheduled at each of the locations listed below. The sessions will focus on the five risk factors that positively influence farm operations, as well as production and revenue.

SESSIONS:

Session 1: Fundamentals of Meat Goat Production

Session 2: Production Risks

Session 3: Marketing Risks

Session 4: Financial Risks

Session 5: Human Resource Risks

Session 6: Legal Risks

Session 7: Wrap-up/Feedback

LOCATIONS:

WORKSHOP 1: February 22 —Natchez, MS

WORKSHOP 2: March 29—Hattiesburg, MS

WORKSHOP 3: April 26—Jackson, MS

WORKSHOP 4: May 24—Batesville, MS

WORKSHOP 5: June 28—Greenville, MS

WORKSHOP 6: July 26—Starkville, MS

WORKSHOP 7: August 23—Alcorn State University, Alcorn State, MS

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION: *All farmers must meet the federal classification of a Small, Socially-disadvantaged Producer, either own or lease a minimum of five acres, and have an annual farm income of less than \$50,000 a year.*

For registration and additional information, contact:

Dr. Terri Cook @ 601.878.2771 or springroseranch@gmail.com

Dr. Cindy Ayers @ 601.668.5583 or cayers2010@att.net

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The Small Ruminant Workshops are funded through a grant from USDA Rural Development; and, in collaboration with Alcorn State University/Mississippi Small Farm & Agribusiness Center and USDA/ Natural Resource Conservation Service.



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Soil and Land Judging Training Held at Brown Loam Experiment Station, Hinds County

By Murray Fulton, District Conservationist



A BIG thank you to the Hinds County Department of Public Works- Carl Frelix, Director, for digging a soils pit for the study. Pictured above are: Brad Mitchell, NRCS, Don Lackey, NRCS, Richard Jones, Hinds County Public Works and Bill Flowers, Hinds County Public Works.

Soil is a basic natural resource used by humans to meet one or more of their needs. It provides raw materials, stores water and nutrients, and supports growing plants that produce food and fiber. It also provides space for cities, highways, recreation, and wildlife. Nothing surrounds us more in our daily lives. But, like so many things important to life, soil goes unnoticed until we learn to appreciate it.

Land judging is a recently added judging event in the field of agriculture for FFA and 4-H Land Judging teams. Land can be judged much like animals or crops. In judging crops, we look at the size, shape, and quality and determine which is the best. Similarly, when judging land, we look for clues that tell us how well the land can produce crops or be used for other purposes. Soil characteristics, climate, and topography are good clues to the soil's capabilities, but close examination of the soil texture, structure, depth, permeability, reaction, degree of erosion, slope, drainage, and flooding potential are necessary to classify land into capability classes. In

land judging, the major factors affecting how the land can be used must be determined. These factors are used to correctly recommend conservation practices and fertilizers for conserving soil.

Land judging can help to:

- Understand basic soil differences.
- Know how soil properties affect crop growth.
- Know why soils respond differently to management practices.
- Realize the influence of land features on production and land protection.

A soils and land judging training session for team leaders of Future Farmers of America (FFA) teams and 4-H



Rachel Stout Land, NRCS Soil Scientist, right, provides soils training to FFA and 4-H students.

teams was recently provided at the Brown Loam Experiment Station. Many thanks to some dedicated professionals from Mississippi State University, (Dr. Billy Kingery), Central MS Research & Extension Center (Dr. Sherry Bell Surrette), Brown Loam Experiment Station (Dr. Bisoodat Macoon), Hinds County Department of Public Works (Carl Frelix, Richard Jones, Bill Flowers), Natural Resources Conservation Service (Joe Addy, Mike Lilley, Allen Curry, Rachel Stout Land) as well as some 35 students and judging team leaders were trained in preparation for the state contest coming up on March 20, 2014 in Starkville, Mississippi on MSU's South Farm.

So what does soil and land judging consist of? The following are a BRIEF description of what is involved in the training.

Soil Factors

Texture

Soil texture refers to the relative proportion of sand, silt, and clay particles in a specific soil mass. Students use a soil texture triangle to classify soils according to the percentage of sand/silt/clay.

Soil Depth

Depth refers to the total thickness of the surface and subsoil plus any underlying material that is favorable for root development. Soils are categorized into several different soil depths. Depth is an important factor of soils. It determines the total amount of water held in the soil, the volume of soil available for plant root growth, and the supply of nutrients available to plants. Generally this material is underlain by bedrock, clay, or shale beds, or alluvial material.

LAND JUDGING

continued from page 4



Dr. Bill Kingery, Plant and Soil Scientist, MSU, uses soil profiles to assist participants with soils training.

Deep soils have more than 40 inches of soil that can be penetrated by plant roots.

Soil Slope

Slope has a tremendous effect on water runoff, erosion, and use of farm machinery. It is expressed as a percent, and is defined as the number of feet that the land rises or falls in a 100-foot horizontal distance. For example, a slope between two points which are 100 feet apart with a difference in elevation of 5 feet would have a 5% slope. Students have to determine the slope on various sections of land.

Erosion

Soil erosion is the detachment and movement of soil materials by wind or water. Erosion consists of three distinct processes — detachment, transport, and deposition. Raindrops falling on unprotected soil, wind striking unprotected soil particles, and the bombarding action of moving particles are detachment forces. Flowing water and air currents are the transportation forces. This is only one of the factors that students used in determining the capability and classification of soils.

Structure

Soil structure is not judged, however, it is very important because of its effect upon permeability. It also relates to how well crops can grow. It is necessary to know about this soil property. Structure means the shape and arrangement of soil particles into clusters or

aggregates. Each aggregate has a particular shape or size and determines the type of soil structure.

Permeability

Permeability refers to the movement of air and water through the soil. Permeability is affected by many soil characteristics. It is extremely important because it affects the supply of air, moisture, and soil nutrients in the root zone available to the plant. A soil's permeability is determined by permanent characteristics such as texture, structure, and consistence.

Surface Runoff

Surface runoff is the relative rate water is removed by flowing over the soil surface. This includes rainfall, as well as water from adjacent slopes. It is the combined effect of soil slope, position in the landscape, permeability, and infiltration rate on runoff.

Land Capability Classes

Land is classified by USDA on the basis of permanent limitations or hazards in its use from the standpoint of keeping the soil permanently productive. The soil features of a particular area are all considered when determining the land capability class. There are eight recognized classes of land. They are divided into cultivated and non-cultivated. Students have to classify land according to its capabilities.'

So...are you ready to go join the kids and compete at the state contest?????



Using a soils probing truck, Allen Curry, left, NRCS Soil Scientist, Dr. Macoon, Brown Loam Experiment Station and Mike Lilly, right, Soil Scientist, check an area for a possible soils pit to be used for on-site studies.



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"Tree Day 2014 – Thank You"



A big thank you to each of the volunteers in the above picture who made Tree Day 2014 possible.



Shintri Hathorn, center, JPS Career Center, is pictured with Don Lackey, left and Murray Fulton, right. Ms. Hathorn's classes wrapped over 2,000 individual pine seedlings that were distributed to third grade students participating in Arbor Day programs.



Assisting customers with seedling selections in the above picture are Phillip Mikell, District Soil Technician, Willie Taylor, NRCS Soil Technician and Ed Porter, Earth Team Volunteer.



Earth Team Volunteers take tree orders as customers line-up for assistance. Pictured above are: Jean Norman, Mary Katherine Callahan and Anna Royston.



After 29 years of presenting Arbor Day programs, Lynn Porter's, daughter, Holly, was able to see a program first hand and assist.



(left to right) Cissi Herrington, Carolyn Crechale and Sara Mercier judge posters in the district's conservation poster contest.



While other Earth Team Volunteers were assisting with Tree Day Earth Team Volunteers Merry Stockwell and Ann Cox judged posters.



Murray Fulton, left, District Conservationist assists Natalie Jordan, Raymond Garden Club, with seedlings. Mrs. Jordan has been a long time participant of Tree Day. She took the seedlings and planted them the same day in various places around Raymond in honor of Arbor Day.

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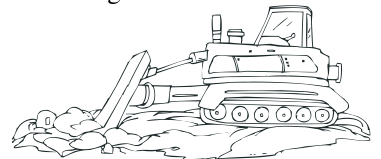


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MS Association of Conservation District State Awards



Coach Jeff Gibson, Wingfield High School presented an outstanding program on "Farming and Football"



For the first time ever in MACD's history a brother and sister won first place on the state level in the conservation poster contest! Pictured above are Cindy Shepherd, center, with her two children, Zack, left, who placed first in the 10th-12th grade and Savannah, right, who placed first in the Special Category.



Renee Smith, long time supporter of the district's essay contest and teacher at Clinton High School, accepted the award for 1st place essay winner, Arithi Reddy, who is a college student at the University of Alabama. Presenting the award is Steve Cantrell, President, MACD.



Steve Cantrell, President of MACD presented Mike Lilly with the MACD Friend of Conservation Award. Mike has assisted the Hinds County Conservation District for years with various soils education projects including programs from elementary schools through college as well as teacher workshops.



At the District Employees Luncheon a hands-on project of outlining a photo frame with twigs was enjoyed. Wyvette Robinson is pictured above working on her individual frame.



MACD is a time to catch up with friends from across the state. In the above picture Nancy Lau, left, Retired MSWCC employee and Earth Team Volunteer visits with Nell Hughes, past President of the MACD Auxiliary.

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Hinds County District Chairman, David Barton and his wife Martha attended the MACD Auction which helps raise funds for MACD Scholarships used for students entering the conservation and agriculture fields of studies.

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Cover Crops and Soil Health

By Brad Mitchell, NRCS, Soil Conservationist



The Daikon radish above is becoming a popular cover crop and aids in breaking up compacted soil as well as restoring nutrients.

The picture above is a Daikon radish pulled from a field in Louisiana that was being used as a winter cover crop. These radishes along with cereal rye, crimson clover, sorghum, partridge pea, and a host of other plants are being used in conjunction with no-till systems to improve soil health. The cover crops are planted when fields are usually bare and help to minimize erosion, improve soil's physical

and biological properties, supply nutrients, suppress weeds, improve availability of soil water, and help break pest cycles along with various other benefits. The species of cover crop selected along with its management determine the benefits and returns. For example, the Daikon radish is planted during the fall and its big roots, which can grow to 6 feet in length, help to break the hard pan (compaction

layer) from years of farming and pull nutrients from deep in the soil that cannot be accessed by shallower rooted plants. For more soil health information and to learn how it can help you on your farm, contact your local NRCS/USDA office.

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